

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Installations of the Serum-Werk
VEB Dessau (formerly ASID)

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1. The following four installations are subdivisions of the Serum-Werk VEB Dessau:

- a. The main institute is in Dessau (N51.50, E12.15), about 200 meters west of the Dessau main railroad station, at # 3 Seminarplatz at the junction of Seminarplatz, sometimes called Herzogin Marie Platz, and Jahnstrasse.
- b. The quarantine station and small-animal breeding station is in the Luisium in Dessau-Waldersee, about 3 kilometers from the center of the city.
- c. The department for the production of immunizing sera, i.e. sera from horses, cattle and sheep, is in Tornau vor der Elbe, with about 2000 morgen of farm land attached to it.
- d. The production department for red murrain (erysipelas) serum from pigs is on the Rottenau farm, formerly called the Knoblauchhof, 3 kilometers from Loburg (N52.07, E12.04) in the Magdeburg district about 55 kilometers from Dessau; a total of 4000 morgen of agriculturally-used ground surrounds this department.

2. The chemical factory in Bernburg (N51.48, E11.44), the so-called "Studienanstalt", study institute, was given to the Pharma VVB in 1950 or 1951 by the Serum-Werk. The Pharma VVB immediately turned this installation over to one of the several chemical-pharmaceutical plants (Gervos, Halle, or other) then under its administration.
3. The agricultural establishments in Tornau were returned to the lessor, the State, since the agricultural establishments in Tornau required a yearly subsidy of 30,000 to 40,000 East-Marks.
4. The main institute in Dessau is comprised of the following:

- a. The "old building" with a small-animal house and a nubiless room
- b. the annex

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- c. the typhus fever vaccine building
- d. the administration building
- e. various barracks (mess, meeting and camp barracks)

5. The "old building", built in 1924 to accommodate a hygienic institute, contains 3 laboratory sections; namely human medicine, veterinary medicine, and chemistry. Each floor has a large main laboratory in addition to some smaller laboratories and rooms for the administration of the respective sections. The building consists of a ground floor and two additional stories as well as a cellar under the entire building. The building is approximately 14 meters long and 10 meters wide. The cellar is used for the filtration, bottling, and storage of serum; it houses the boiler installation, which is much too small, for buildings 1 and 2. The collecting and processing of retroplacental serum into "Homoseran" takes place on the ground level floor where there are also rooms for testing serum. On the second floor are a department for anti-tetanus and anti-diphtheria protective vaccines, laboratories for veterinary diagnostics and anaerobe vaccines for veterinary medicine. The third floor houses the collection of the various production strains of bacteria and laboratories for the differential diagnosis of the strains. Building 1 was extensively destroyed by fire in March 1944 but was reconstructed in 1946. The equipment in this building is adequate but not up-to-date. The laboratories are comparatively small and the corridors on the second and third floor are very narrow.

6. The small animal house was added to the "old building" in 1950-51, and is about 12 meters by 6 meters. Dissection of the experimental animals is performed in the cellar. The unused experimental animals (the animals kept in stock, the bulk of which are in the Luisium) and the animals infected or otherwise put on test are kept separated from each other on the ground floor. The second floor houses the snake farm, in which up to 1,000 sand vipers (*Vipera ammodytes*) and about 4 rattle snakes (*Crotalus* species) are kept. Venom is collected and processed only for the preparation of the injectable snake venom solutions used in the treatment of rheumatism (Viprasid) and for the therapy of epilepsy (Epileptasid). Snake bite antisera are not produced nor is venom furnished to other plants. The production of venom is barely sufficient to fulfill the commercial demand.

7. The "Nubilosa" room (building 9) was formerly the experimental animal house and is about 8 meters by 4 meters with a basement under only part of the building. The ground floor is on the street level and the 2nd floor is used as a fodder room. Until October 1951, the building contained an evaporation installation (2 old-fashioned vacuum evaporators) and a small spraying installation ("Nubilosa" installation), which as far as is known was used only occasionally after the war. During the war a yeast peptone was produced on a large scale and utilized for the preparation of nutrient media. This building was situated much too close to Building 1 and so hampered the passage of passenger cars and trucks that it was scheduled to be torn down in 1952.

8. Building 2, oriented in a north-south direction, was added to the "old building" in 1939, because the requirements for vaccines, demands for which originated chiefly with the Wehrmacht, could no longer be met in the "old building". Building 2 is about 45 meters long and 10 meters wide. Except for a few rooms on the ground floor, it was destroyed by fire following an air raid on Dessau in March 1944. It was reconstructed in 1946-47 with two stories instead of the three stories it contained prior to its destruction. Present use of the building is as follows: cellar-store rooms of various kinds for raw and auxiliary materials, vaccines and sera for finished products; ground floor- arrival of goods, receipt of finished products, rooms for the plant technologists, and some laboratories; second floor- central bottle washing department for sera and vaccines, sterilization and nutrient media kitchen for all Dessau departments. Capacity of the nutrient media kitchen is much too small; installation of a large additional nutrient media kitchen with auxiliary installations in Building 3 had been planned. On the second floor there are also several laboratories for the production of veterinary vaccines, red murrain cultures, and tuberculin. Several large incubating chambers making mass production possible are

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installed in various rooms on the ground and second floors. In the "old building", however, are only one old, small incubating chamber and one new, large one.

9. In the cellar of Building 2, a low-temperature refrigeration apparatus, permitting serum purification according to Cohn's method, was to be installed by the end of 1951. In October 1951 the low-temperature refrigeration machine had already arrived and its installation was almost completed.
10. Building 2 was originally a large-dimensional layout but has by order of the Soviets been so subdivided that a separate laboratory is available for almost every vaccine. However, Building 2 is not wide enough, the corridors are too narrow and the east side is not sufficiently protected against the sun. Despite these deficiencies, the largest quantities of vaccines have so far been produced in this building.
11. Typhus fever vaccine building, building 3, was erected in 1942 for the production of typhus fever vaccine and was equipped, in accordance with modern principles, exclusively for bacteriological purposes. Building 3 is adversely situated as it is separated by a public street from the administration building and the buildings described thus far. A heavy traffic of persons takes place continuously between these two parts of the plant. [redacted] Building 3 is 35 meters long and about 13 meters wide. In 1951-52 it was to be extended and provided with an additional story! From later information, building 3 is now 45 meters long, 13 meters wide and has a basement, a ground floor and, as a new addition, a second story. The basement contains, in its northern part, the pharmaceutical department; in the middle, the washing installation for the pharmaceutical department, and, since the boiler capacity in the "old building" was no longer sufficient, a greatly expanded boiler installation. Toward the south, a large nutrient media kitchen capable of meeting all requirements was to be added. The inspection department (chemical), the laboratories for the apprentices (oriented along chemical lines) and some rooms of the research and developing department are on the second floor toward the east, while toward the west there are several bottling and storage rooms. An incubating room in addition to many small incubators and refrigerators, are also on the second floor.
12. According to the plans, the production facilities for red murrain (swine erysipelis) adsorbate vaccines were to be accommodated on the entire third floor of building 3. When this department actually occupies the whole upper story, it will, if operated the year-round, make possible the production of more red murrain adsorbate vaccine than is needed in the East Zone. Here the mass cultivation of bacteria could, if necessary, be carried out on a considerable scale.
13. On the second floor of building 3 is a room with low-temperature refrigeration installations of the Mudd and Flosdorf type. The units, corresponding to those shown by schematic illustrations in the publications of these authors, were made of glass. They were not regularly in operation and up to October 1951 no permanent or specialized operation of them was provided. Therefore, up to October 1951 the vacuum-drying of mass cultures of bacteria would not have been possible.
14. Building 3 was not destroyed by the fire which destroyed much of Dessau but was demolished by a bomb which had fallen nearby. Building 3 was the first building put into operation after the breakdown. It was, and is today, the most modern and most efficient building of the Dessau plant.
15. Connected with building 3 by an archway, in which the gateman's apartment is located, is the workshop with a garage for five passenger cars or trucks, but only 2 or 3 cars are available at the Institute at this time.
16. The second administration building (building no. 6) was rented in 1951 as an addition to the other buildings. It is a multiple-family villa, 15 meters by 8 meters, and has a small third story. Except for the guard room of the Volkspolizei (reception room) and one visitor's room, all rooms are used by administrative units. The offices of the plant manager, deputy plant manager, technical manager, commercial manager, chief accountant, and their secretaries are located on the second floor of this building.

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17. South of building 3 are two military barracks, each 40 meters in length, which were chiefly used for storing raw and auxiliary materials. Old supplies of serum were stored in concrete-lined air raid shelters located here, but these shelters proved unsuitable for this purpose due to the formation of mould. North of building 3 there is a barracks (building no. 5), 15 by 10 meters, which serves as a canteen and a mess hall and is used for meetings; it is to be replaced by a "culture palace" as soon as the state will appropriate the necessary "investment money".

18. The quarantine station and small-animal breeding station in the Luisium represents the former serum plant of Asid in the years 1925 to 1936 and was the former stud stables of the Duke of Anhalt. There are accommodation facilities for about thirty horses in a brick stable and for about one hundred more in several barracks. Furthermore, there is a brick stable used as a breeding station for guinea pigs, rabbits, and mice. There are sixty-six morgens (eighteen hectares) of meadows around the installation. The plant is capable of producing serum, including the production of cultures and contains installations for the filtration and sterilization of the serum. Large-scale production of bacterial cultures would not have been possible with the installations in use in October 1951. Because of its isolated location occasional infectious experiments with pigs, e.g. hog cholera and swine erysipelas, are carried out in the Luisium.

19. The production department for immunizing sera from horses, cattle, and sheep at Tornau-on-Elbe is located 300 meters north of the Tornau station at the state road from Dessau to Magdeburg and consists of 2 tracts of ~~h.u.12~~ the agricultural or farm tract and the production department tract. Both tracts of buildings are separated from each other. Construction of the serum station was started shortly before and completed during World War II. The serum station was comprised of one stone barracks with an operating room and all the necessary rooms for the production of vaccine, serum evaluation, and serum production; one stone barracks for the dissection of large animals, and five stone barracks (some of them very large) in which altogether up to five hundred large animals could be kept. Two of these barracks were destroyed at the end of the war, but there are still accommodation facilities for about two hundred and fifty horses or cattle and a herd of rams.

20. Following the detection of contagious anemia among the solid-hoofed animals in the Dessau plant (Tornau and Luisium) in 1947, at which time all the horses had to be slaughtered, the Soviets ordered the splitting up of the large general horse stables into small stables. These small stables were to be separated from each other with regard to the control of contagious diseases and were each to have accommodation facilities for only eight horses. The alteration of the buildings has been carried out. In addition, all passages had to be provided with concrete coverings.

21. Taken as a whole, the Tornau serum station is probably the one with the greatest capacity and, apart from the installations on Riems Island, the most modern in East Germany.

22. There was never any large-scale production of bacteria or virus in Tornau prior to October, 1951. However, the installations could readily be adapted for this purpose.

23. During the war bacteriological work was conducted in the distillery in the south tract of the Tornau farm. After the war, however, the interior equipment was removed.

24. The stock of animals in Tornau in 1951 was about the following: a maximum number of one hundred horses for diphtheria and tetanus, and only a few horses for testing each one of the following sera: coli, paratyphoid enteritis, pyosepticum viscosum, and various other sera; a maximum number of twenty-five cattle for testing the same kinds of serum, and fifty sheep for testing diphtheria serum.

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25. A large farm at Rottensau (near Loburg) was assigned to Asid by the Soviets in 1946 with the task of producing immunizing serum against Schweinepest (hog cholera) for German farms under Soviet administration. To accomplish this Asid built on this farm a completely isolated and fenced-in serum production plant with its own slaughterhouse. The cost was about 360,000 Reich Marks. (See [redacted])

26. The discontinuance of the order after about 1½ years left Asid with the problem of finding some other function for the plant, which was set-up primarily for the prophylactic immunization of pigs with horse serum. Through the outbreak of infectious anemia among the horses, a very severe shortage of red murrain serum occurred, but since the price of the serum did not matter, the production of pig immunizing serum against red murrain was initiated. Prior to October 1951, about 14,000 liters had been produced and a production of about 6,000 liters per year was possible.

27. The serum plant consisted of one small laboratory building, an annex to the mansion house, in which the cultures for the immunization were prepared. It also contained one operating room for the simultaneous blood-withdrawal and immunization of as many as five pigs, several large pig pens accommodating about six hundred pigs taking part in the immunization procedure, one slaughtering room, and one meat packing plant.

28. The personnel of the production plant numbered thirty-five persons in the fall of 1951.

29. The farm cooperated with the serum plant by furnishing fodder and by participating in the breeding of pigs.

25X10. [redacted] Rottensau is unsuited for conversion into a large-scale bacteriological plant, but it would not be difficult to produce Schweinepest virus there on a large scale and if the necessary drying equipment were installed, to dry and store it.

31. It follows therefore that in the case of necessity, Building 3 and possibly also Building 2 would be suited for the preparation of bacteria cultures. As of 1951, however, the drying installations were not sufficient for mass production. A prerequisite for such a production would be the perfect working of the high-pressure steam boilers, without which the necessary large quantities of agents grown upon nutrient media could not be produced.

25X1 32. During World War II virus propagation on eggs was practiced on a large scale in Building 3. [redacted] by installing infection traps and incubators this production could be started again at any time.

25X33. [redacted] for the production of virus from animals the Rottensau serum station is best suited on account of its isolated location and its large size. However, [redacted] no indications that such production was planned.

25X1 34. The production program of the Serum-Werk VEB Dessau remains much the same as it has been over the past two decades. As far as is known, new preparations, with the exception of red murrain Al(OH)₃ adsorbate vaccine, have not been added since October 1951. Purified tuberculin preparations were already completely developed prior to that time and scheduled for production. Production of a protective vaccine against atypical Geflügelpest (New Castle's disease in poultry) by the Fraub process had been taken over by the Riems Island Experimental Station prior to 1952. Otherwise, the production program and the technological situation in October 1951 corresponded to the situation of about 1935. New developments of a noteworthy character and virus research work were not being conducted.

35. Typhus virus has not been worked with since 1945 and influenza virus only for a short time when an influenza epidemic was allegedly underway. An anti-influenza vaccination using the Professor Herzberg β /vaccine was to be manufactured but the production of this vaccine was not possible.

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36. Divided into principal products, the production of the Dessau serum plant in 1951 comprised:

- (a) Immunizing sera, most of them not purified, against diphtheria and tetanus;
- (b) Retroplacental serum, not purified (Homoseran);
- (c) Plasma preparations for the transfusion of blood, if any, (on a small scale only);
- (d) Aluminum hydroxide vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus, and scarlet fever;
- (e) Vaccines against typhoid and paratyphoid B, whooping cough, and gonorrhea;
- (f) Veterinary sera and veterinary vaccines;
- (g) Solutions of the hormone of the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, on a small scale;
- (h) Tuberculines (purified) and diagnostic tuberculin ointments.

37. Antibiotics were not given out for veterinary medicine purposes up to October 1951 but preliminary negotiations with Jenapharm had been conducted for this purpose. Since depot drugs are necessary for veterinary medicine and Jenapharm did not produce enough procaine penicillin, the Dessau serum plant did not give out even one mega of penicillin to the veterinarians of East Germany until late 1951. Streptomycin and aureomycin are scarcely available for humans and cannot even be considered for the treatment of animals.

38. The production capacity of the Dessau plant is limited both from the standpoint of supply and from the standpoint of the purchasers. The situation was such that when a particular kind of serum or vaccine was needed, the necessary raw and auxiliary materials (horses, agar, meat) could not be procured in time hence the physicians and veterinarians resorted to some other means. After production had started, the specialized demand frequently vanished because the need no longer existed, and it became difficult to sell the materials.

25X1 39. [redacted] the size of the installations and the existence of a large staff of more or less well-trained, competent personnel would, with proper management and with the availability of the necessary raw and auxiliary materials, make possible a very large production. During World War II the Acid Serum Institute produced a considerable part of all vaccines required by the Wehrmacht with much smaller installations than the ones available today.

40. Any estimates would of necessity be inaccurate. However, by outfitting the plant with good executive personnel and establishing an adequate supply of raw materials, production could probably be increased to several times the present amount without difficulty.

41. At the present time the production of the Dessau plant is in many regards unsatisfactory and insufficient. [redacted] In any case, up to October 1951 gaps in the supply were the rule rather than the exception.

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42. Up to that time production difficulties at the serum plant in Dessau repeatedly caused sharp arguments between the plant manager and the technical manager, Dr. Heinig. [redacted] after the departure of Dr. Heinig, who, according to [redacted], has charged over to Riems Island, production difficulties still persisted. [redacted] not know who the present technical manager is.

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[redacted] Comments:

1. According to the U.S. Army Air Forces Dictionary, one morgen of land is equal to 0.84 acres, in the south of Germany; and 0.631 acres, in the north.

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2. The "Richtfest", a feast customarily given to German workmen when the framework of a building is completed, took place in mid-summer 1952.
3. A brief biography of Dr. Kurt Herzberg is given by Kuerschner's in column 792.
4. In the United States all sera offered commercially are purified, in Western Europe 50% of that offered commercially may be purified, whereas in Eastern Europe no attempt appears to be made to purify the sera.

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MISSING 4 ATTACHMENTS

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